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# Melodies and Mountaineers

Isabella  
McLennan  
McMeekin

Poetry (American)

10/1/24

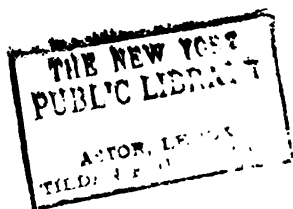
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## **MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS**









"LITTLE LOG CABIN"

# Melodies *and* Mountaineers

*By*

ISABELLA McLENNAN McMEEKIN

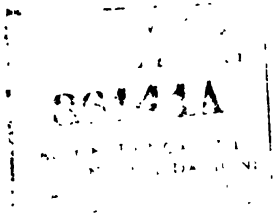


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## **Dedication**

*It is with fond affection that I dedicate these  
verses to the Folk of Line Fork,  
Letcher County, Kentucky.*

**Isabella McLennan McKin**

BT Dec. 22/21



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## Music of Mountains

Music of Mountains  
And song of the Hills,  
Rhythm of Forests  
And tune of the Rills.

The dark is a drum  
The wind is a flute,  
Silence is fingering  
The strings of her lute.

Immortal the singing  
Yet mortal ones may  
Hear vaguely its echo  
At dawn o' the day.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Lullaby

Little One, sleep,  
Shadow wings creep,  
Sleepy One, sleep  
Here in the nest.

Little One, dream,  
Forest fires gleam,  
Dreamy One, dream  
Safe and at rest.

Softly I sing,  
Softly I swing,  
Loving, I sing  
You at my breast.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Summer Is Green

Summer is green,  
Winter is white,  
Daylight is golden,  
And blue is the night.

Ships on the sea  
Venture and pass,  
Luck to the sailor!  
Love to his lass!

Yellow and grey  
Butterflies roam,  
Dear is the fire-lit  
Hearth of my Home.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Mountain Peace

Mountain peace  
Is like a flower  
Whose one brief hour  
Enhance its dear loveliness.

Fragrance sweet  
As mignonette  
Can we forget  
Or ever lose its hauntingness?

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### A Song

“Adam delved  
And Eve span,”  
It shall end  
As it began.

“Gay go up  
And gay go down,”  
The dusty road  
Leads but to town.

“Howdy, Stranger,  
Spend the day,”  
When Judgment’s coming  
Who can say?

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Stormy Night

'Tis such a night of wind and rain  
As city folk will never know,  
For what dream they, who're safe at home  
Of how the storm may Grow and Grow?  
A creature it of mighty strength  
How hungrily the great beasts roar,  
And Loneliness, a frightened child,  
Is standing there, beside my door.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Fairy Wind

Fairy Wind,  
From Wonderland,  
I see You pass  
And kiss my hand.



## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Compensation

The golden leaves  
Float from the autumn trees  
And drop casually  
To the ground.  
One moment  
They have of Freedom,  
Before it  
They were bound,  
After it  
They shall rot,  
Are they the less golden  
For all of that?

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Rythm

The wind blows forever,  
The river flows on,  
Singing, it never  
Doth vary its song.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Grey Winter Trees

Oh stark and lonely trees  
Who make me think  
Of hungry children  
Crouched together  
Comfortless,  
Are you the same  
As those most proud and radiant  
Courtiers,  
To whom I curtesied  
In green July?

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

Only the Road —

Only the Road  
My longing knows,  
And It will not tell  
Where my spirit goes.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### The Manuscript

A turquoise sky  
And a silver sea,  
Three painted gulls  
And a cedar tree.

Unfinished sketch  
In a manuscript  
The artist paused  
E'er the brush was dipped.

Another stroke  
And a huge grey sea  
Will cover the gulls  
And the cedar tree.

As life was blue  
In my childhood's age  
Will ink smear black  
On the "finis" page?

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Over the Mountains

Over the mountain,  
(Sing, sing low)  
Over the hill,  
Springtime is singing,  
(Soft and low)  
As maidens will,  
Only her lovers  
(Still, be still)  
Hear aught of the singing  
(Soft and low)  
Over the hill.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Depression

Black and huge  
The Mountains lie,  
Dying Beasts  
Beneath the sky.

Impotent  
And little, I  
Pity them,  
And weary, sigh.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### A Thought

A single flower  
That scents an hour  
Of drab reality  
Is proven worth  
Of destined birth  
And of Christianity.



## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Spring Song

The little birds  
Sing roundelay,  
And gayly make  
A holiday.

The vagrant winds  
Like children run  
And romp beneath  
The morning sun.

My heart is glad  
For nothing more  
Than that the spring  
Is at the door.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Sleeping Shadows

Under the trees  
The shadows lie  
Like tired children  
Sleeping after play.  
Earth is their Mother  
And she sings them lullaby.  
Flowers are sweet  
And forests green,  
Winds are soft  
And dreams come true,  
Shadow is a velvet cloak  
And sleep, dear heart, beneficent.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Autumn Song

Oh scarlet leaves  
Are lovely things,  
Which Autumn as  
A favour brings.  
My happiness  
Is glad and sings,  
For scarlet leaves  
Are lovely things.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

*horrible title*

### Green Cheese

I'll crumble yon pallid moon  
And build me castles  
In far off Spain,  
A galleon cloud  
Shall bear me thence  
Adventuring  
Through black and gold  
Enameled nights  
Like this,  
Whose spell  
Is as a cloak  
Enfolding me.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Young April

Young April is a charming maid,  
But newly come to town,  
I met her in a forest glade  
And stopped to praise her gown.

A gorgeous frock of palest green  
Methought it passing fair,  
"Perhaps she had to Paris been,  
Or was it sent from there?"

'She laughed and shook her pretty head,  
(A most engaging elf)  
"Ah, no, young Sir" she coyly said,  
"I made it all myself."

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Fate

Every seed brings forth a flower,  
Every love, one perfect hour,  
Therefore take what the Gods may send  
In recompense of the bitter end.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### London Bridge Has Fallen Down

London Bridge has fallen down,  
Still the River flows;  
Hopeful hearts go up to Town,  
Still grey sorrow grows.

Silver bells are very sweet  
Up a country lane,  
Have you heard the broken feet  
Stumbling after gain?

Sing a song of sixpence, Oh  
And a scarlet coat,  
We who found the sixpence know  
It wasn't worth a groat.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Promise

The River hurries by  
On silver sandled feet,  
There's promise in the sky  
That He and Love shall meet.



## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Rose Song

“Roses are sleeping  
And night winds sigh,  
Cease from their weeping  
E'er Life flow by.”

“Roses red  
Soon lie dead,  
Why should I cease my weeping?”

“Each new spring  
Will roses bring,  
Not dead they lie,  
But sleeping.”

Heart that is broken,  
Forget thy pain,  
God sends for token  
Roses again.”

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Happiness

Ring her round with roses,  
Roses white and gold,  
Crown her head with roses,  
My love is white and gold.

Make a song of gladness,  
Sing it now with me,  
I am filled with gladness,  
My love is here with me.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### The Blind Man

“The Spring, you say is here?  
Ah, yes, I smell the April wind.  
You found some violets in the wood,  
And all the jonquils are in bloom?  
They are yellow, like the sunshine,  
I remember that.  
I will sit here,  
On the bench beside the door,  
Tell me of them once again,  
White violets  
And rows of golden jonquils  
Standing upright, in the good brown earth,  
I saw them once  
Myself.”

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### The Passing

One day in September  
The summertime passes,  
Suddenly hearing  
Her skirts in the grasses,  
I wake from my dreaming,  
But scarcely  
A shadow has shifted, I wonder  
If summer was passing,  
Or was it my childhood?  
What matter? I'm ready,  
Fond youth and frail summer, Adieu,  
Soon shall come winter, and with it  
My work.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Beyond

Open moor and spacious sky,  
The haze of blue September,  
In a dark grave I must lie  
But this I shall remember.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### The Answer

Last night  
I listened  
While the people talked.  
They said,  
"That mountaineers  
Were brutal,  
That feuds were merely politics,  
And there was no Romance;  
Should they, therefore, show you  
Truly,  
As photographed in prose,  
Or, rather,  
Sugar-coat you  
For the Public Fancy?"  
They talked as if you were  
"Exhibit A,"  
Rather are you  
Like the definition some one gave  
Of Woman,  
"Like the rest of the world,  
But one degree more human,"  
You are not as feather-fine

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

As last night's Folk,  
Yet are You  
As True,  
And Good,  
And sometimes — Beautiful,  
As They.  
Your hospitality  
Of bread,  
And beans,  
And "Spend the Night"  
And "Come again,"  
Is more sincere than theirs.  
You're trigger-quick,  
But trigger-kind;  
Moon-shine drunk,  
But who has heard  
Of Mountain Funk?  
Philosophers and Poets  
Weavers and Workers,  
You and They  
Are much alike.  
What man was there  
Who has not,  
Within his heart,  
Agreement with your singing?  
"Beef steak when I'm hungry,  
Corn-licker when I'm dry,

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

Pretty women when I'm lonely  
And Heaven when I die."'  
This is my answer,  
And this my song,  
Is their's a better one?



## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### My Lesson

They taught me many things  
Beyond the Land of Copy Books,  
These Mountaineers,  
To whom  
I owe a debt  
Of Love.  
To rise at five o'clock,  
To build the fire,  
And cook whatever food there was,  
To leave the house  
Ship-shape,  
And get to school on time,  
To salute  
My flag,  
And teach the lesson for the day,  
To enjoy utterly  
The good hot dinner  
Which a neighbor cooked for us,  
To kill snakes,  
To chop small trees,  
And watch for "sang,"  
To work all day  
And sleep all night,  
In quietness  
Among the hills.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### The Gleaners

They are old and grey  
Though not with years,  
Their backs are bent with weariness  
And yet their youth  
Was yesterday,  
A tragic end, you say?  
And yet  
Though tired with life,  
They once did live,  
Were young, till dirt and toil  
Parched lands and ugly pain  
Clutched at their throats  
And choked  
Young loveliness.  
Once, but yesterday,  
They sang.  
It is those,  
Drones of the world,  
Painted dummies,  
Velvet clad and lustreless,  
For these your pity,  
Who having never lived,  
Do not grow old.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Heaven and Hell

Battle,  
Murder  
And Sudden Death.  
Beauty  
That thrills  
With every breath.  
Such are the mountains  
And such their folk,  
God is their Vision  
But Hell their Yoke.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### The Woman's Work

Kill a sheep,  
And pack him in,  
The men must eat  
When they have worked,  
Beans and corn bread,  
Cucumbers  
And onions,  
Honey and sour milk,  
Coffee, strong coffee,  
Fill the cups,  
Men who grub and haul,  
Who swing the mattock and the ax,  
Who cut great logs  
And drag them,  
They are hungry folk,  
Go, kill the sheep,  
The kittle 's on the boil.

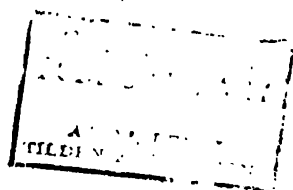
## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Aunt Katie

She is bent and old,  
Life and its work  
Have bowed her head  
And made deep wrinkles in her patient face.  
Necessity is a stern Master  
He has stood behind her  
With a whip,  
Poverty  
Dirt  
And Weariness,  
A meek submittal  
Because there was no other way.  
Are there compensations?  
Yes, there must be  
For her face is kindly  
And goodliness is in her eyes,  
But what they are  
I cannot say.  
May Heaven grant her Peace  
And Joy.



Aunt Katie, Uncle Henry and Two of Their Grandchildren



## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Uncle Henry

Uncle Henry is Aunt Katie's man  
And her companion,  
Old Age  
And Drudgery  
Have stood beside them,  
Yet at evening  
When they tilt back their chairs,  
(Rush bottom ones, caned by his hand)  
And sit in the doorway,  
Smoking their pipes  
And gazing  
Into the purple distance  
Where the mountains fade,  
Then there is another guest  
For I watched and saw him enter,  
Up the steep and crooked path  
He climbed,  
And stood beside the door.  
They smiled



## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

And called him "Friend"  
Nor minded that his name  
Was Death,  
For well they knew, that through the years  
He had been Love.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Emma

Emma lives over the mountain  
And walks alone,  
Between its tall trees,  
On her way to school.  
She is silent,  
Quaint and very solemn  
In her new red calico dress.  
The other children  
Do not play with her.  
She sits in lonely solitude  
Dreaming of the Little Folk  
Who dwell in the forest  
And walk with her  
Over the mountain.  
They are her Friends,  
These books  
And boisterous ones  
Are shadows,  
She sees them, that is all,  
Her spirit walks alone  
Child, she is, of mountain quietude  
Whose cloak is all of dreams.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Orpha

Orpha was sixteen  
And quite conscious of the fact.  
She had a georgette waist, a rhinestone comb  
And a ruby ring,  
(The stone was pink glass, but still it was  
A Ruby Ring,)  
Her beau had given it to her  
And it meant  
LOVE.  
He went to Oklahoma  
And the girl  
Found money and followed Him  
Across the Mountain  
He had left and she was too shy  
To buy a ticket,  
So she came home again,  
The Ruby Ring was gone,  
And with it, Youth.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Johnnie

Johnnie is my pet,  
A delicate little thing,  
He has the most intriguing ways,  
A bubbly giggle  
And a soft way of patting your cheek  
With his grubby little hand,  
He is as irresistible  
As a puppy.  
A pet lamb is his Dear Possession,  
It comes with him  
To school.  
Its name is "Ollie"  
And he recites its virtues  
By the hour,  
He's teaching it, he says,  
Its alphabet,  
And truly it can bleat  
B A A.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Bessie

Bessie is beautiful.  
She is eleven  
And fair as spring anemones.  
A silky braid  
Crowns her small head,  
And faded shrunken blue  
Hangs as a slip  
To her brown knees.  
A lithe and lovely creature  
In the moment of her Youth.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Maggie

Maggie lisps.  
She has short hair,  
And would like to be a boy.  
Her curse is shyness  
For then her tongue  
Gets twisted.  
In utter helplessness  
She ties her handkerchief  
In rumpled knots,  
And scrunches up her dusty toes.  
When she forgets Herself  
She has a charming smile,  
Slow and radiant,  
Full of jollity,  
When I ask a question  
There is a desperate struggle,  
She whispers back her answer,  
But at recess  
She fights and plays and lives,  
Yet cannot find the Key.  
Poor Little One.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Nance

Nance is of the Earth  
Most Earthly,  
And has found it  
Very pleasant, thus;  
Simplicity is virtue  
Rather than a fault,  
Heaven is generous  
And Youth is gone  
Like woodland flowers.  
Nance was built  
For Life  
And Love,  
And therefore took it.  
Big as the wind,  
An Amazon  
As bronzed and beautiful  
As Mother Earth;  
On Sunday she wears  
Pink calico,  
And shoes.  
But through the week  
Her dress is red,

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

As washed and faded  
As Autumn's leaves  
(Whose kith and kin she is)  
Up the mountain, near the top,  
She hunts her cow,  
Pausing, now and then  
To listen for its bell,  
Which has a different tone  
From other ones.  
Far below  
I watch her wandering,  
A scarlet shuttle  
Through the woodland warp.  
The pattern is a simple one,  
Yet even in such  
The weaver sometimes  
Breaks a thread,  
And in the finished fabric  
Who shall see the knot?



## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Dexter

Dexter is Nance's child,  
Whom she adores.  
He's six years old  
But delicate.  
He loves his kitty,  
Nance, and his Great-grandfather,  
Who watches bees  
The long day through.  
He comes to school,  
Says "A B C"  
Then, like a shadow is gone  
To play  
Or follow Nance.  
They never talk,  
And yet their love is proud  
And big.  
He stands beside her  
When she milks  
And hoes  
And puts the kettle on.  
Besides his "jeans"  
He has a velvet suit,

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

(Sears Roebuck, 1910)

Life, after all  
Is far more fair  
Than Preacher Jones  
Would have us think.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Coverlets

Mountain women weave  
Bright coverlets  
Whose patterns  
Are the stories of their lives.  
Even their names  
Are tales  
Of old romance.  
Listen to their singing  
"Governors Garden  
And Olive Leaf,  
Rose in the Wilderness  
Winding Vine,  
Forest Wonder,  
And Mountain Rose,  
Sixteen Snowballs,  
Orange Tree, .  
Wreaths and Roses,  
Summer Wheel,  
Parsons Beauty  
And Kings Delight,  
Star of Venus,  
Floating Wave,

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

Lonely Heart  
And Lovers Knot,  
Wheel of Time  
And Weavers Choice,  
Birds of the Air,  
Indian Camp,  
Blazing Star  
And Honey Comb,  
Piney Rose and Flowery Plain,"  
Back and forth  
The shuttle goes,  
Warp and woof  
The Pattern grows  
"Gentlemans Fancy  
Or Blooming Rose."

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## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### The Working

Send out the word  
For all the men  
To come,  
A new log house  
Is to be raised.  
Tall trees,  
Walnut  
Pine  
And oak  
Must fall.  
Some must be sawed,  
Two men working  
Back and forth  
Back and forth,  
Until the teeth  
Of the huge saw  
Are nearly through the trunk,  
Then a peg is driven  
And a shout is heard  
"Stand back!"  
A ripping tear,  
A thunder crash,

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

The great trunk lies down the slope  
Heavy, dead,  
With all its pride  
Of forest years  
A heap of sawdust and dry chips.  
From Death comes Life,  
And soon the logs are cut and notched,  
Another day  
They will be raised,  
With careful art  
And old tradition  
As architects,  
And a new home  
Will stand in the forest  
Where once the trees  
Grew tall.  
Wilderness recedes  
The kettle boils  
And children sing.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Blossoms

Blossoms in these mountains  
Have such quaint, delightful names,  
They bring to mind old England  
And those stately gorgeous dames  
Who loitered in their gardens  
Among these same most lovely blossoms  
With the same delightful names  
Three hundred years ago.

“Beauty of Spain,” black and gold  
What old Romance does your naming hold?  
“Seven Sisters” and “Never Still,”  
“Sleeping Babe” and “Merry Mill”  
“Michaelmas Daisy” and “Autumn Flames.”  
Sweet are the blossoms and sweet their names.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Sunset

Majestically  
The sunset,  
Like a great king,  
Comes  
Bright clad  
In crimson robes,  
With retinue of splendour  
And with far flung pride  
The Conqueror proceeds,  
While in his train  
A gorgeous host  
Of minions pass  
Into the valley.  
Mauve and rose  
And beautiful  
The dancers follow them,  
And windy steeds  
Of burnished gold,  
With manes aflame  
And fire-shod hoofs,  
Prance high,  
In ecstasy,



## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

We bow  
And deep obedience make  
Unto the King  
Who sees us not, But passes on.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Blue Loveliness

Blue flowers and bluer skies,  
Blue days that pass  
To where Night, sleeping, lies  
Blue shadowed on the grass.

Blue space above the stars  
A sapphire arching makes  
For Dawn behind whose bars  
Blue morning once more breaks.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Ballads and Songs

The moutains are old  
But the day is new,  
The stories are told  
But the tale is true.

My grandmammy sat  
At the log house door  
Strumming her zither  
And humming them o'er.

"Barbara Allen,"  
"My Dearest Dear,"  
"Cherry Tree Roundel"  
And "Seven Long Year."

"Young Lord Lovel,"  
"Fair Bettey Anne,"  
"Broken Token"  
And "False Young Man."

The Teller may change,  
The Tale is the same,  
Wherever Death,  
And Love are the Game.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Will-o-the-Wisp

NORTH AND SOUTH  
And East and West,  
Over the hills,  
Ever the Quest.

UP AND DOWN  
Wanderings best,  
Weary the heart,  
Never a rest.

YOUNG AND OLD  
Grey toilers be,  
Yet one and all  
The Vision see.

NIGHT AND DAY  
We live or die,  
Hills are steep  
But blue the sky.

## MELODIES AND MOUNTAINEERS

### Contentment

Little log cabin  
Under the hill,  
Michaelmas daisies  
Blossoming still,

Firewood and water,  
Good morning and night,  
Cheerful uprising  
And bedtimes delight:

Life is so simple,  
This pattern we weave  
Teaches us daily  
In God to believe.



